

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
SMS-01 IO-13 OMB-01 /081 W
-----001023 080525Z /17

R 071429Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6507
INFO AMEMBASSY OSLO
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 21409

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PGOV, NO, SV, UR
SUBJECT: PRAVDA ARTICLE ON SPITZBERGEN

1. PRAVDA SEPTEMBER 6 CARRIES ARTICLE ON SOVIET COLONY ON SVALBARD BY V. BARDIN, IDENTIFIED AS CANDIDATE OF GEOLOGICAL SCIENCES PRESENTLY LIVING AT BARENTSBERG. ENTITLED, "BETWEEN EUROPE AND THE NORTH POLE," ARTICLE ATTEMPTS TO MAKE POINTS THAT SOVIET SETTLEMENTS ON SPITZBERGEN ARE JUST LIKE OTHER SOVIET CITIES AND CLOSELY TIED ECONOMICALLY AND SOCIALLY TO THE SOVIET HOMELAND. FOR EXAMPLE:

-- COAL MINED AT BARENTSBERG AND PIRAMIDA IS SHIPPED TO MURMANSK, ARCHANGELSK AND OTHER CITIES;

-- THERE ARE SCHOOL, KINDERGARTEN AND TELEPHONE CONNECTIONS WITH REST OF WORLD;

-- THERE IS RICH CULTURAL LIFE WITH LIBRARIES, SPORT ACTIVITIES, INDEPENDENT ARTISTIC GROUPS -
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EVEN A MUSEUM.

2. COMMENT: ARTICLE AVOIDS DIRECT DISCUSSION OF THE POLITICAL REALITIES ASSOCIATED WITH SOVIET PRESENCE ON SPITZBERGEN (EXCEPT FOR MENTION THAT IT IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH 1920 TREATY). NEVERTHELESS, AUTHOR'S EMPHASIS ON THE NORMALCY AND EXTENT OF

SOVIET PRESENCE, UNARTICULATED ASSUMPTION THAT SOVIET
PRESENCE IS INDEFINITE (THE FOURTH FLOOR OF A 125
APARTMENT BUILDING JUST FINISHED AND NEW HOSPITAL
JUST OPENED), THE CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION TO RUSSIAN
HISTORICAL TIES TO THE AREA, AND FAILURE TO MAKE
CLEAR TO READER THAT NORWEGIANS HAVE ADMINISTRATIVE
CONTROL, PROVIDE INDIRECT METHOD OF INFORMING
NORWEGIANS AND OTHERS THAT SOVIET POSITIONS MUST
BE GIVEN CAREFUL CONSIDERATION -- IF ONLY BECAUSE
OF THEIR OVERWHELMING PRESENCE. TOON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, COLONIALISM, DEPENDENCIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 sep 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MOSCOW21409
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780365-0732
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780993/aaaacziu.tel
Line Count: 72
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 82016956-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1520108
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRAVDA ARTICLE ON SPITZBERGEN
TAGS: PEPR, PGOV, NO, SV, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/82016956-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014